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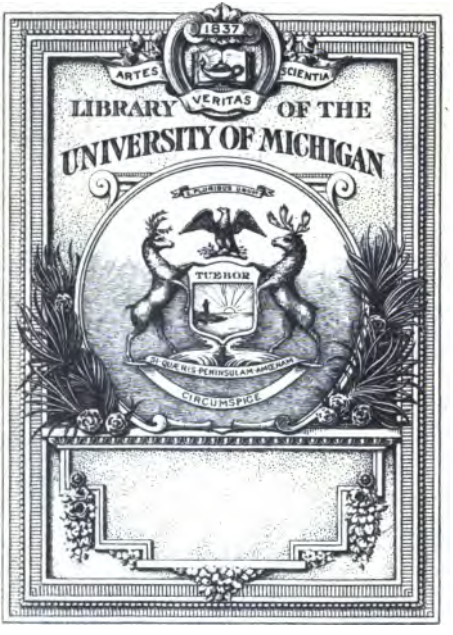

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NATIONAL PROVERBS
INDIA

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Uniform with this Volume

1. ENGLAND
2. SCOTLAND
3. IRELAND
4. CHINA
5. RUSSIA
6. JAPAN
7. SERBIA
8. HOLLAND
9. ARABIA
10. SPAIN (Text in Spanish and English)
11. ITALY (,, ,, Italian ,, ,,)
12. FRANCE (,, ,, French ,, ,,)
13. BELGIUM (,, ,, French, Flemish and English)

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"A proverb is to speech what salt is to food."

Arabic Proverb.

THE Proverbs of a Nation are not only an epitome of its wisdom, but crystallise for us much of its national temperament and popular habits of thought. Nowhere, perhaps, can what are regarded as the national traits be so compactly presented as in these saws and proverbs. In the preparation of the present series the utmost care has been taken to unearth those sayings which are in danger of falling into disuse, and are not widely known. The commonplace Proverbs have, in most cases, been rejected; little-known sources have been investigated, and everything possible done to give, in each case, the cream of the available material. The publishers will be grateful to hear of any good but little-known Proverbs which readers may be able to add to the present collection.

It should be mentioned that the present volume of Indian proverbs has been selected by a clever Anglo-Indian scholar, Mr Abdul Hamid Minhas.

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National Proverbs: India

GOD provides for all.

Saved once, saved for ever.

Delhi is still a long way off.

What need there is of repentance, when the birds have grazed the field.

He will give half a rupee, but not half a pie.

He who leaving half runs after the whole is drowned beyond finding.

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National Proverbs

Call a low-born a gentleman and he will kick his very own brethren.

A bad man is better than a bad name.

No one can hide a nim (a kind of bitter leaf) leaf with embroidery.

Nothing can be learnt without learning.

The child is under the arm and she is searching throughout the city.

Service is self-inflicted slavery.

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India

It is impossible to darn the rent made by Fate, even if you darn with the needle of wisdom.

Can't walk because the yard is crooked.

The sieve chides the winnowing fan.

Walking and wandering does not kill, but sitting does.

Do good while you are alive.

The overawed shopman gives full weight.

A bribe-taking officer is subservient to his subordinates.

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Even an ant will attack when hard pressed.

Call a grocer father and he will give sugar.

If the horse is to be shod let the blacksmith do it.

The right hand washes the left and the left washes the right.

You can't hide your belly from a midwife.

Money is the best servant.

Pay money and get your work done.

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India

Breath is the music of life.

Do good and cast it into water.

Stick to one thing and all will come; aim at all and none will come.

A pea has only two parts.

If one door is shut there are a thousand others open.

Two days a guest, but the third day a nuisance.

A moment's shame brings a day's food.

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National Proverbs

He who laughs will be laughed at.

Don't drive everyone with the same stick.

A beggar, a borrower and a child are all destitute of understanding.

A duty is that which is discharged.

Victory is from God, but strike with all your might.

What is done is done, it is vain to pine over it.

Bray a fool in the mortar, yet will he not be wise.

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India

Friendship with an ass results in a kick.

If you have no cow, milk an ox.

Strangers are strangers after all, and relatives are relatives.

He that digs a pit for others often falls into it himself.

It is easy to swallow a bone but very difficult to digest it.

A fair face needs no paint.

Never stand before a judge or behind a donkey.

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National Proverbs

Three things ease the heart from sorrow : water, green grass, and the beauty of women.

A mouse found a piece of turmeric and set up a druggist's shop.

Travelling in an ekka will give you nothing but jolts.

Who disgraces himself will not hesitate to disgrace others.

A wise man can be spoilt but not a fool.

When God gives, He gives through the roof.

It is only young bamboo that can be bent.

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You can't float a paper boat or gallop a paper horse.

Necessity lacks judgment.

Mouth cannot be sweetened by saying the word " Sweet."

A spoilt son becomes a gambler, while a spoilt girl becomes a harlot.

Money makes the mare to go.

Avarice leads to hell.

Lovers' quarrels : kiss and make up.

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National Proverbs

A slow fire makes the bread sweet.

December and January do not make winter, but the wind does.

To make a bullock out of a speck of dirt.

It is better to possess a wise foe than a foolish friend.

A simpleton's friendship is the plague of life.

Don't run if you are afraid of stumbling.

If you don't wish to be spattered, don't throw stones into mire.

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He who bathes before his meals and sleeps after them, will never fall ill.

Dine with the mean and be reminded of it all your life.

Cattle don't die of the currier's curse.

An hour with a clever man is far better than a whole day with a fool.

You can't hide the moon by throwing dust on her.

Who climbs falls.

A glutton eats up his own house, while misers eat others.

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National Proverbs

Drums sound loud because they are hollow.

Scheming does not avail against fate.

He who drives mercy and faith from his heart will one day weep.

The value of comfort is only known when it is lost.

Visiting every day makes one cheap.

The poor man's rage only hurts himself.

Slay the serpent before he bites you.

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Firmness of purpose is the best of all virtues.

If fortune favoured, where would then be misery ?

Destiny's writ can't be erased.

He who leaves a beaten track is sure to go astray.

He lives in a hut and dreams of a palace.

Good mind, good find.

Compassion is the sign of magnanimity.

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Three persons ruin an assembly : a tell-tale, a fool, and a thief.

Everyone supports the strong and none supports the weak ; likewise wind fans the fire and puts out the lamp.

The firm of foot will find a footing everywhere.

Be patient in your mind, that you may find ease for your body.

The branch of patience bears sweet fruits.

Lie not if you can help it.

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India

Don't go about looking and staring; it is a bad habit; people will call you a rake, a fool or a thief.

It takes two hands to clap.

A wound from a sword will heal, but not a wound from a word.

The sword slays once but kindness many times.

Poverty declines before labour.

Give a loan and make an enemy.

Sell on credit and lose a customer.

Digitized by Google

When the head is in the mortar, why fear the pestle ?

Out of the pivot into the socket.

Bamboos to Bareilly—*i.e.* Coals to Newcastle.

Believe him a true friend who loves you without any hope of gain.

There is no cure for caprice.

As you sow the seed so shall you obtain the fruit. No one will reap sugar-cane by planting nim tree.

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Giving counsel to an ignorant fool is like throwing a ball on to a dome.

Better give from your pocket than go surety for a thief.

There are men and men, as every stone is not a gem.

Man is known by his company as gold by touchstone.

Touchstone for a man is dealing with him.

The countenance is the reflection of one's heart.

To lose is to learn.

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National Proverbs

Spit at the sun and the spittle will fall on your own face.

Eat fire and your mouth will burn; eat credit and your belly will burn.

To sing to the deaf, to talk to the dumb, and to dance to the blind, are three foolish things.

All who will may wash in the running stream.

Associate only with your friend and keep aloof from your enemy.

A child judges by the heart, a man by deeds.

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The friendship of a base man is like a wall of sand.

A small capital ruins its master.

When the west wind blows the harvest thrives.

Preserve your honour and you will get ease.

Early sow, early mow.

You cannot get oil out of unripe mustard.

He only knows the price of ease who once experiences difficulty.

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When good fortune comes, poverty flies away.

Eat no more than you can digest.

Business thrives as long as business drives.

Who wakes gets, who sleeps loses.

Wherever there is a hole, water will run into it.

Fight out a quarrel on the spot.

As the country so the fashion.

Digitized by Google

In buying even a farthing pitcher, test it and sound it well.

Every grain has its seed.

His actions are controlled by his food and drink.

He who feared lost his life.

A liar never has a memory.

Anger's best cure is silence.

A tongue in control is a guard to one's turban.

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National Proverbs

As is Hasan, so is Hassain.

Remember it is easy to promise but hard to perform.

Drink even water at a tavern and you are suspected of having drunk spirits.

An arrow out of the bow and a word from the lips return no more.

Misfortune is nigh when wells run dry.

As long as passion, anger, pride and avarice fill the mind, the learned and the ignorant are the same.

A priest's garment will make anyone a priest.

Digitized by Google

A cat at the banquet and a fly on the dining-table are always unwelcome.

A generous man makes a miser grieve.

One stinking fish spoils the whole tank.

You cannot put two swords in one sheath.

One " No " averts seventy evils.

One beauty in man and a thousand in his clothes.

A man without fortune is not worth a straw.

Digitized by Google

National Proverbs

Health is equal to a thousand blessings.

What ! sweets and a plateful of them !

One thing for another prevents complaint.

To try to please everyone is to try to touch the sky.

There is no food in the house and he invites guests.

The head of a proud man must often bow.

The cloud which thunders seldom rains.

One kauri is a gold mohar to a pauper.

Digitized by Google

India

What is gone is lost, what is left is saved.

God sitting on His judgment-seat hath mercy upon all; as each man's service, so reward doth unto him befall.

Often a man is his own worst enemy.

There would be no thieves if there were no receivers of stolen goods.

A woman's threats and a goblin's stones break no bones.

A lawyer's fee and a harlot's wages are paid in advance.

Blessed is he that calls nobody names.

Digitized by Google

He is a fool that is offended at truth.

The bastard will speak out loudly where the true-born hangs his head.

A spoon for every pot.

Cash dealings are always best, so give with one hand and take with the other.

Love can't be hid by hiding.

In love, beggars and kings are equal.

Murder, musk, dry cough and love will out.

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Clothes befit the body, and the heroes a battlefield.

Milk pleases the body and friendship the heart.

Haste is madness, patience wisdom.

Even a borrowed pipe is unpleasant.

If fate be propitious all will go right.

Hot, warm and sour destroy virility.

A lofty shop and bad food.

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National Proverbs

Mounted on a camel yet bitten by a dog.

You can't creep to steal a camel.

It wants a perfect face to eat halwa.[1]

My own charm practised on me.

Whatever is in the pot will of course come into the ladle.

Killing an assassin is no sin.

It is still the first day.

[1] Halwa: a costly and luxurious Eastern dish.

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Laugh with those who laugh, make war with those who war.

A smile is the enemy of woman and a cough of a thief.

Jest leads to earnest.

A laughing king and coughing thief are at their end.

Hunger is the best sauce.

Truth is in the image of God.

Falsehood weeps before the truth.

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National Proverbs

Happy days never last long. Opportunity once lost is never regained.

Nothing lasts for ever, except God's name.

Travellers tell many a lie.

Give your body and get money.

Plenty waits on poverty and poverty on plenty.

Fever is the enemy of body and love the enemy of heart. The man possessed of both loses heart and body.

Digitized by Google

Oral evidence is valueless in face of written one.

If you go fox-hunting, prepare to meet a lion.

No one comes learned out of his mother's womb.

Business is the touchstone for men.

Every-day visits lessen esteem; bad company lessens holiness; asking favours lessens self-respect; using a remedy lessens illness.

Dust the bench before you sit on it.

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Silence is half consent.

What's not to happen never happens; what is to happen is going to happen.

Out of sight is over the hills.

An ignorant person got hold of a new cup and drank water till he burst.

The end of a good man is good.

Man is like a bubble of water on the ocean.

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Stones don't rot in the water.

A sin will never be concealed by hiding.

Who gambles on expectations will sink.

He who relies on others always fasts.

Pay respect and respect will be paid.

Reliance on God is a great thing.

Nobody shows respect where there is no money.

Digitized by Google

National Proverbs

Love the child that hath no mother or father.

God is one and has no equal.

Never advise the cruel and base; an iron peg will never pierce through a stone.

Avoid the dog that is known to bite.

He whose character is unstained prospers greatly.

It is not good to abide by him who hides anger and hypocrisy in his heart.

Never trust him again who takes but does not return.

Digitized by Google

India

Never weep over your sorrows before your enemies.

Go north or go south, your fate will follow you.

Pay cash and keep your credit.

Who listens to the voice of a parrot in the midst of big drums ?

Neither respect nor pride can live for ever, for all the world must die.

When the woman shows her teeth the man knows the end.

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National Proverbs

The shortest men are strongest.

The rope-dancer's son is always turning somersaults.

A ripe mango must drop.

If you are innocent don't fear.

The five fingers are not all of the same length.

An excuse for a sin is worse than the sin itself.

Learn the value of Time.

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Adversity shows both friends and foes.

No harm in appearing to be an ass when to do so serves your purpose.

Necessity makes us do all things.

Who sleeps early and rises early will never know poverty.

Money makes the gentleman.

Drop added to a drop will make the River Nile.

He is not an alchemist who has to beg for coppers.

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National Proverbs

He who does not heed the advice of elders will be in trouble ever after.

Never look at the teeth of a gift ox.

Lose heart and lose all; brace up your mind and win. Almighty God can only be found through faith in the heart.

Hunger is never appeased with imaginary sweets.

What is in the mind will be seen in the dreams.

Keep your shoes under your own eyes or they may be stolen.

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India

A good name is better than wealth.

A bad man is greater than God, because he is more feared.

Don't part with your ready cash for profits in the future.

Imitation is not intelligence.

An ounce of learning requires a pound of sense.

Certainty is a sure guide.

In this world the strongest of all things is fate.

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National Proverbs

Confide thy treasure to the treasury, but never the secret of thy heart.

Such sauce for such a mouth.

No human being can tame a tongue.

With money it is a home—without it is a ruin.

To lose your money is to die before your death.

Respect for the old is an atonement for sin.

If you love your love, you should love her thoughts too.

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Laughter is the source of quarrels, whilst a cough is the source of disease.

Procrastination's friend never gains his end.

The soldier fights but the general gets the credit.

A child can be known in his very cradle.

With a stick in your hand the rent is paid up.

Nine in cash are better than thirteen in credit.

Sluggards fit for kicks won't heed words.

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National Proverbs

If you are good the whole world is your friend.

Black calamity destroys orthodoxy.

Self done is always well done.

Give to others *when* you can spare.

Even a dog is a lion in his own lair.

Man's honour is in his own hands.

Calamity keeps away from the sensible.

Real is real, copy is copy, but cheap is nasty and dear is good.

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Gentility has no flaw, base birth no fidelity.

The husband of a woman is man, the husband of a man is his livelihood.

A woman is tested by poverty.

The man who misses his chance and the monkey that misses its branch can't be saved.

Rejoice and be thankful when good fortune comes, and be patient when it leaves you.

Liberty is the gift of God.

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National Proverbs

The Five Great Evils, never beneficials, are Famine, Plague, War, Thieves and Officials.

I met a hundred men on the road to Delhi and they were all my brothers.

Your gods and my gods—do you or I know which are the stronger ?

Those who beg in silence, starve in silence.

Old priest—young tiger.

Let thy hair grow long and talk Punjabi, that is all that makes a Sikh. (*N. Ind.*)

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Two arrows in the quiver are better than one; and three are better still.

For the sick cow a crow; for the sick man a Brahmin.

Trust a Brahmin before a snake, and a snake before a harlot, and a harlot before an Afghan. (Similar to: A friend before a messmate, a messmate before a shipmate, a shipmate before a dog, and a dog before a soldier.—*Devon Naval.*)

The jackal that lives in the wilds of Mazanderan can only be caught by the hounds of Mazanderan.

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National Proverbs

The jat stood on his dunghill and the king's elephants went by. "Oh, driver," said he, "what will you sell those little donkeys for?"

God made the hare and the Bengali.

Who goes to the hills goes to his mother.

There are more ways of getting to a sweetheart than butting down a wall.

A priest always takes his share.

When halter and heel-ropes are slipped, do not give chase with sticks but with *gram*.

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India

I am dying for you, and you are dying for another.

What is in the Brahmin's books that is in the Brahmin's heart. Neither you nor I knew there was so much evil in the world.

Love heeds not caste nor sleep a broken bed. I went in search of love and lost myself.

If your mirror be broken, look into still water; but have a care that you do not fall in.

When man and woman are agreed, what can the Kanzi do?

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National Proverbs

If I can attain heaven for a price, why should you be envious ?

To hear is one thing ; to know is another.

When the jackal owns he is grey, how black must the jackal be.

He who rebukes the world is rebuked by the world.

He who watches long shall at last have his reward.

A little thought in life is like salt upon rice.

By adding the tail to the trunk one makes up the whole elephant.

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New land means new quarrels.

They waste not the polish on the cow's horn.

If we listened to the howling of every jackal the business of the town would stop.

To delight in ornaments is to end with a rope for necklace.

Horse food is better than the kick of a horse.

He who trusts a woman will walk on duckweed in a pool.

One can choke a guest with curds.

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Even the mugger (crocodile) is sometimes satisfied.

No one is all happy from his beak to his tail.

Big thief and little thief; it is easy to say who gets the pickings.

North are the vermin; South are the lice.

Last year's nuts are this year's black earth.

What IS has BEEN.

When to-morrow comes we will kill for to-morrow.

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India

When fortune smiles one may reign as a king.

Neither a child that is unchastised nor the moustache that is untwirled will be right.

A deceiver destroys when near, a harlot in contact.

Take a reptile and place it on a cushion and it will seek a heap of dried leaves.

Whatever exists in the universe exists in the human body.

Should a teacher make a slip it is attributed to his art.

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The value of a father is known after his decease, that of salt when exhausted.

Quietness is worth thousands of gold.

Is hair a rare sight for the barber?

Silence is useless to a man without judgment, as a mirror to a blind man.

You may break a colt, but not an old horse.

If you mock the lame you will limp in time.

Things not understood are admired.

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India

The higher the ape goes the more he shows his tail.

Black clouds produce white water.

Wood in wilderness and strength in a fool are of no avail.

A lamb is as dear to the poor as an ox to the rich.

Beggars' plans last till daybreak.

Where the heart is past hope, the face is past shame.

The brightest of all things, the sun, hath its spots.

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National Proverbs

Two dogs strive for a bone and the third runs away with it.

Two dogs and a mouse and two wives in a house.

A fox should not be on the jury at a goose's trial.

Even a king is the son of his father.

Beauty in the unworthy is poison in a casket of fine gold.

The king kills at once. God delays and kills.

The precious body is a stone thrown in the air.

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India

Even a buffalo will not live in a house where it is not regarded.

Though sandalwood be rubbed, its fragrance will not be destroyed.

A garment not worn is a prey to moths.

It is better to be the slave of the wealthy than the wife of the indigent.

A cocoa-nut shell full of water is an ocean to an ant.

To the master a word, to the servant a burden on the head.

Even a beast without horns will attack the poor.

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Sores about the waist and debt to one's neighbour are both bad.

As an abandoned woman one may ride on an elephant, but as a thief she cannot go along a street.

He is a bird without wings.

Beauty will sit and weep, fortune will sit and eat.

A weeping man and a smiling woman are not to be trusted.

All the days before the age of discretion are as the days before birth.

Even obeisance is an offence to an unloving mother-in-law.

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A loving disposition is a river without a ripple.

A thousand men may live together in harmony; two women cannot, even though they be sisters.

The combined light of a thousand stars cannot equal a single moon.

Where there is a school, there is a fool.

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